

Greensboro paper said, "Get Out." It is time to bring our troops home. They've done everything they've been asked to do.

And that reminds me, a few weeks ago, I went to Walter Reed at Bethesda—it's the new consolidated military hospital here in Washington—and I saw four marines from my district, Camp Lejeune. Three of the four had lost both legs. The one that had not lost both legs was a lance corporal who asked me, with his mom in the room, Congressman, why are we still in Afghanistan? And I looked into the young man's face and I said, I don't know why we're still there. You all have won many, many battles, and it's time to bring you home. And the only thing he said, Mr. Speaker, was, Thank you.

That brings me to a letter that I received from a retired marine down in my district about a year ago. He said, "I am writing this letter to express my concern over the current Afghanistan war. I am a retired marine officer with 31-plus years of active duty."

Let me go down in the letter because there is another point I want to make.

"Our senior military leaders in Afghanistan continue to say that we are making progress, but at what cost to our country? This war is costing the United States billions of dollars a month to wage and we still continue to get more young Americans killed. The Afghanistan war has no end state for us. I urge you to make contact with all the current and newly elected men and women in Congress and ask them to end this war and bring our young men and women home."

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"If any of my comments will assist you in this effort, you are welcome to use them and my name."

Mr. Speaker, I don't know why we are—we've got this debt crisis facing our country, and yet we've got a corrupt leader in Afghanistan named Karzai that one day likes America, and the next day he hates America; and we send him \$10 billion a month, and it's borrowed money from the Chinese.

And yet we're going to say to the American people we're going to cut the programs for little children; we're going to cut the programs for senior citizens. But Mr. Karzai, you'll get your \$10 billion.

And that brings me toward the end of my comments, Mr. Speaker. I contacted a marine general who's been a very dear friend of mine for a number of years, and he sends me questions to ask in committees to the Secretary of Defense and others who might be testifying.

But something that has always stuck with me is what he closes this email with—and I have many emails—"What do we say to the mother and father or the wife of the last marine killed to support a corrupt government and a corrupt leader in a war that cannot be won?"

That is the question. And I hope the American people will call on Congress,

both parties, to bring our troops home before 2014.

Mr. Speaker, I close by asking God to please bless our men and women in uniform, ask God to please bless the families of our men and women in uniform. I ask God, in His loving arms, to hold the families who've given a child dying for freedom in Afghanistan and Iraq. I ask God to bless the House and Senate that we will do what is right in the eyes of God for His people, and I ask God to give wisdom, strength, and courage to President Obama that he will do what is right in the eyes of God for His people.

And three times I ask, God please, God please, God please continue to bless America.

Let's bring our troops home.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to address their remarks to the Chair and not to a perceived audience.

SMART SECURITY: PROTECTING AMERICA BY RELYING ON THE VERY BEST OF AMERICAN VALUES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. REED). The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, every one of us in this Congress believes that keeping the Nation safe, as well as providing benefits to our veterans as promised, is our very top priority. It's a question, however, of just how do we do that. And a decade of war and military occupation is not the best way.

Whenever spending cuts are on the agenda, as they are right now with the supercommittee racing to meet its deadline, military and defense programs continue to get a pass. Why should the Pentagon get a blank check while safety-net programs have to look for "change in the couch cushions" to keep their programs going?

It's time for the Pentagon to share in the sacrifice, especially since it's been so generously funded over the years, a 50 percent increase in the DOD budget over the last decade, bigger in real dollars today than it was at the height of the Cold War.

Ending the war in Afghanistan would save at least \$10 billion a month—actually, it's more like 12 now—to say nothing of the lives we would save and the injuries that would be avoided.

But I think we should go further in cutting the base Pentagon budget. Just to give a few examples, I'm a longtime advocate of eliminating the V-22 Osprey aircraft. It's a program that, if we eliminated it, would save \$10 billion, and it's a program that is notorious for cost overruns and for huge safety concerns.

And we can dramatically reduce the Nation's nuclear arsenal. Why do we need—I ask you this—why do we need 5,000 warheads when just one is enough to destroy life on Earth?

We can wring huge savings out of the system by fundamentally changing how we think and how we deal with national security. For pennies on the dollar we can keep America safe by implementing a smarter security policy, by supporting a civilian surge over a military surge.

My SMART Security platform, which is H. Res. 19, would make war a very last resort and adopt a different posture toward the rest of the world. It's not isolationism. When I say I want to bring our troops home from Iraq and Afghanistan, I'm not saying we abandon those countries. I'm saying we must engage them in a different way. That means investing in their people and their capacity to lead lives free of deprivation and despair.

So instead of weapons systems, let's invest more on development in humanitarian aid, more on maternal health programs, more on mosquito nets to prevent malaria, more on education, health care, microlending, et cetera, et cetera.

You know what would promote our national security, Mr. Speaker, like nothing else is a genuine, well-funded commitment to eradicating poverty and malnutrition in the developing world. Instead of invasions and occupations, SMART Security emphasizes diplomacy. It emphasizes the civilian surge, multilateralism, and peaceful conflict resolution.

It also calls for more investment in energy independence, nuclear non-proliferation, democracy promotion, and civil society programs abroad. Isn't that a better way to combat terrorism than sending 100,000 troops to a part of the world known for widespread anti-American sentiment?

We must stop equating national security with armed aggression because that's how we ended up with out-of-control Pentagon budgets and an ever more dangerous world. In fact, Mr. Speaker, military force has been proven to oftentimes undermine our security instead of enhancing it.

SMART Security protects America because it relies on the very best of American values, moral leadership, compassion, our commitment to peace and freedom. It costs pennies on the dollar. It is efficient and fiscally responsible.

So let's bring our troops home, cut the Pentagon budget, and implement SMART Security now. Then we can have real cost savings in the United States.

And, Mr. Speaker, that's just the way it is.

PFC CODY NORRIS—TEXAS SOLDIER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, halfway around the world, in the desert of the sun and the valley of the gun, the American warrior stands fighting the forces of the enemy.